



# **Santa Clara Fire Department**

## **COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION**

1675 Lincoln Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050

PHONE: (408) 615-4970



## **PHASED OCCUPANCY GUIDELINES**

*This standard is a summary of Fire Department clarifications of City and State Codes. Information contained herein applies to typical circumstances and may not address all situations.*

### **PURPOSE:**

When occupancy of one phase is needed prior to the completion of the entire project, a phased occupancy plan is required to be submitted to the Fire Department for approval. The phased occupancy plan must be submitted and approved prior to any request for 'Fire Clearance'.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Fire Watch:** A "temporary measure" intended to ensure continuous and systematic surveillance of a building or portion thereof by one or more qualified individuals for the purposes of identifying and controlling fire hazards, detecting early signs of unwanted fire, raising an alarm of fire, and notifying the fire department. This is not intended to facilitate continual or ongoing shutdowns of a fire-life system(s) for construction purposes.

**Nuisance Alarm:** Any alarm caused by mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or lack of proper maintenance, or any alarm activated by a cause that cannot be determined.

**Re-Occupancy of a Building:** The Community Development Department, Building Division approves re-occupancy of a building after the building is determined safe for use. While the fire department participates and issues a 'fire clearance, the fire department is just one of several approving departments/divisions within the City.

**Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO):** A temporary certificate of occupancy is a document issued by the Community Development Department, Building Division certifying the building is safe for use. While the fire department participates and issues a 'fire clearance', the fire department is just one of several approving departments/divisions within the City.

### **PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Given the complexity and oversight required a Fire Protection Engineering firm or Fire Protection Engineer is required to development and supervise the plan implementation.
2. At time of submittal a completed permit application, plans, and applicable fees shall be submitted.
3. Scaled building plans showing the areas to be occupied and how the required exiting system for each area is to be maintained, including all pertinent fire and life safety information;
4. Phasing boundaries must be clearly identified on the phasing plan (i.e., fire barriers or walls);
5. Phasing boundaries and any materials used to create physical barriers must be clearly identified on the phasing plan, including but not limited to construction materials, and rating. Fire walls installed per the Building Code are the only acceptable way to separate buildings for fire/life system protection;

6. Access to and within the completed phase must be separated from the construction areas, and under no circumstance will egress be allowed through the construction zones;
7. Fire Department access roadways, fire hydrants, and fire department connections shall be clearly noted on the plans;
8. Construction zones, trailers, staging areas, and fencing shall be shown on the plan.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

1. Once the plan is approved the consultant shall schedule a meeting with our inspection staff to verify the overall concept, open permit issues, safeguards during the construction process, and site inspection frequency requirements based on the risks posed. Our inspection staff will ensure the project management team has a clear understanding of the phasing plan, and their roles and responsibilities. This will be an opportunity for any addition concerns or specific considerations to be discussed prior to implementation.
2. All fire and life safety systems for the entire project must be completed and tested, unless otherwise approved;
3. Electrical and gas services provided to the completed phase must be completed and approved to the point of service, including emergency generators;
4. Mechanical systems serving the completed phase must be completed and approved to the points of service;
5. Special inspections must be signed off prior, and approved (e.g., smoke control, fire alarm, tool animation);
6. All elevators indicated in the scope of work must be installed and operational with approval of the State Department of Industrial Relations, Elevator Unit;
7. The permanent address must be posted on the street(s), and building(s);
8. Knox-Box must be installed and at least two sets of keys or access cards provided;
9. Adequate parking shall be provided and access from the parking to the building shall not be through a construction zone.

**\*\*\*The above list is not intended to be a complete list of requirements for all projects\*\*\***

#### **MODIFICATIONS:**

1. If changes are made to the original occupancy and construction phasing plan, it will be necessary for a revised proposal to be submitted for review and approval;
2. Additional field inspection maybe required, and it may be necessary to verify how the change(s) will affect inspections that have already been performed, and if adjustments need to be made to existing permits or if new permits are required.

**COMPLIANCE:**

1. The construction and design teams should consider the time required in advance for calling for inspections, and plan accordingly;
2. The business and/or property owner will be held financially responsible for all nuisance alarms.
3. Implementing a Phased Occupancy plan is the sole responsibility of the construction and design team. Failure to comply with any and all conditions could result in “fire clearance” being withdrawn.